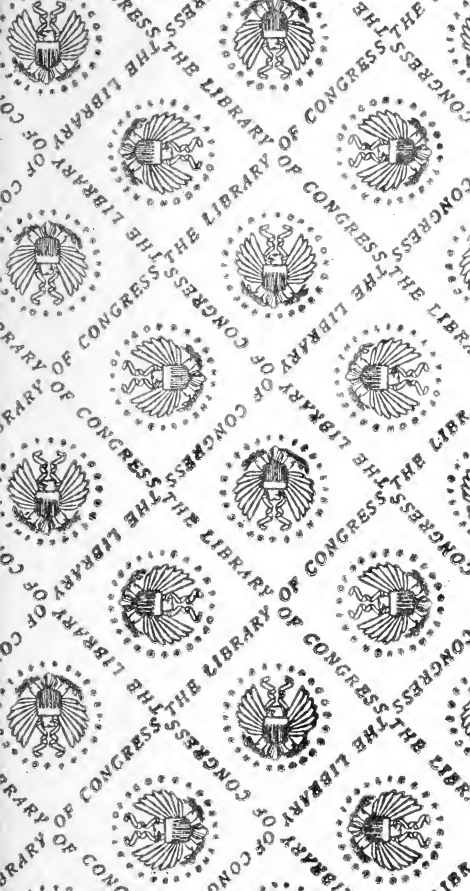


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Miss Brown

THE

POOR MAN'S SABBATH,

WITH OTHER

POEMS.

BY

JOHN STRUTHERS.

.....

Every one that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it,
and taketh hold of my covenant ; even them will I
bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in
my house of prayer.—HOLY SCRIPTURES.

.....

From the third Edinburgh edition.

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BOSTON :

PUBLISHED BY J. BELCHER.

1813,



77

PR 5499

.5216

A.M. 13 Mar. 29.

PREFACE.



THE Sabbath, whether we advert to its origin, its ultimate end, or its immediate effects, is calculated to excite admiration and gratitude in the bosoms of all who are susceptible of religious feelings, or moral perception.

In disposing of his creatures, in appointing the manner how, and the time when, he will be served, it sets forth the Creator as absolutely sovereign; and in accommodating the rule of duty, and the commemoration of his wonderful works, to their weakness and wants, as perfect in wisdom, and abundant in mercy.

Descending from general to particular views of the Sabbath, there is, perhaps, none more interesting than as it affects the child of penury and toil. To him, whose daily employ is rather mental than corporeal, though it gloriously changes the objects of pursuit, it breaks in but little upon the uniform tenor of his life ; while, to him whose every day is ease and recreation, it can, outwardly, have no distinguishing feature, except it be shy reserve, or gloomy severity.

The Poor Man's Sabbath has in this respect a delightful peculiarity, growing, like many other blessings, out of his humble situation ; the full force of which can alone be known by experience. To him it still returns with all the attractions of novelty, enlivening his otherwise uniform existence with the most cheerful vicissitude. While it awakens him to the duties of religion, it releases him from the drudgery of the world ;

while it elevates him to the contemplation of glory and immortality, of that glory it presents a lively image, and a grateful foretaste in the rest and refreshing it bestows upon his body.

To delineate this particular view of the Sabbath, is the design of the following Poem. It was, as a memorial of scenes that had passed away, originally sketched for the Author's amusement, during a period of sickness and despondency, that in a great measure precluded him from more necessary, and, perhaps, more important employment. The approbation of some friends, to whom it was occasionally shown in whole or in part, led to its publication; and the favourable reception it has met with from the Public, inspires a hope, that the solitary hours devoted to its composition, have not been spent altogether in vain.

In preparing this Edition for the press, some passages he has endeavoured to correct, and some deficiencies he has attempted to supply; by which, though he is far from presuming that his work is yet able to abide the stern judgment of criticism, he is hopeful it will be found considerably improved in sentiment. He perfectly agrees with one, who, by the by, had no occasion for any apology, "That a work which cannot be read with approbation unless the mind is continually referring to the circumstances under which it was written, ought not to be brought before the Public, but (when those circumstances are very extraordinary) as a literary curiosity," which he never had, nor at present has any intention of doing. He, however, presumes, that he has certain claims upon critical candour, which, under more favourable circumstances, he certainly should, at least, have declined to plead.

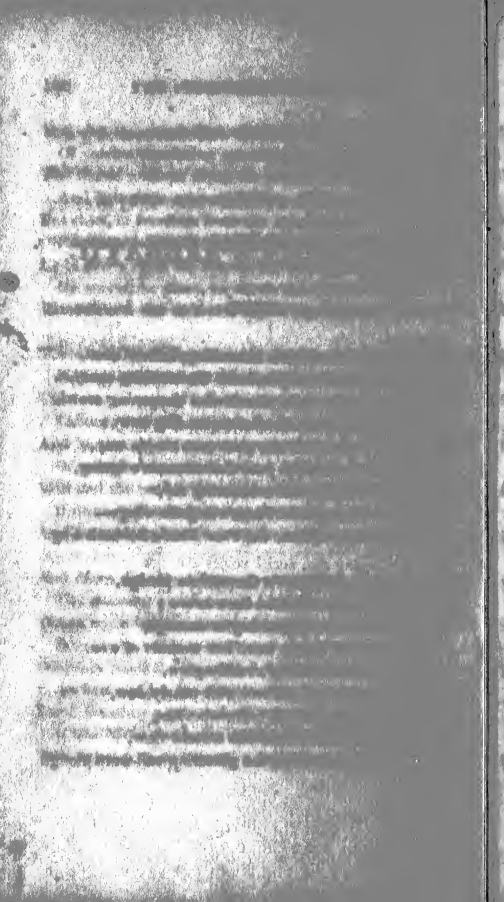
These claims have been already allowed far beyond his expectations, yea, to the utmost extent of his wishes ; and he desires nothing further but to be perused with the same indulgence as heretofore.

Reader, I have already trespassed too long upon thy patience, and, with one remark, shall have done. It is a parting remark.—We probably have never met, and may never meet beneath this sun ; but we shall infallibly meet, unmindful of ceremonious formalities, when these heavens are fled, of our Sabbaths to give a particular account before the throne of the Eternal. In his awful presence I tremble while I write ; be not thou in reading altogether unconcerned. Let our united prayers be, that we may be presented before the throne with exceeding joy, knowing as we are known ; that which is perfect

being come, and that which is in past done away : when lost in boundless felicity, and in the full blaze of redeeming love, every bosom shall beat with equal rapture, and every voice, pitched in perfect unison, shall take up the song to Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

SONNET.

WHILE Bards illustrious, rich from Learning's stream,
That wavy winds his classic shores along,
Inhaling strength, as Heaven's resistless beam,
Sublime the world with high heroic song:
I, artless, touch a less ambitious theme,
Rude, wandering Nature's solitudes among,
What time the fires of eve begin to gleam,
And thickening rise aerial voices strong;
There, giving cheerful to the passing gale
Devotion's note, that scorns the greedy grave;
I ask no more, could but my harp prevail,
One single relict of the good to save;
And if the virtuous poor Man in my tale
Awhile be ransomed from oblivion's wave.



THE
POOR MAN'S SABBATH.

AMIDST the winds that blustering, hollow howl,
The frosts, that creep cold on the budding spray,
The fires that glare, the clouds that deepening scowl,
In life's low vale, with soul-depressing sway ;
Say, Muse, what lights the poor man on his way,
Gives him to drink at cool Contentment's spring,
Sheds on his weary soul a cheering ray,
And bids him soar on Hope's angelic wing :—
The Sabbath day divine, the Poor Man's Sabbath sing.

Hail ! holy day, of Heav'n the certain pledge,
And pleasing prelibation here below ;
'Tis thine, Creation's groaning to assuage,
And bind with balmy hand her wounds of woe.
Rejoicing in the morning's ruddy glow,
The labouring Ox, all wet with pearly dew,
The clover'd dale at will traverses slow,
While idly gleams upon the distant view,
Far o'er the fallow field, the glittering soil-worn plough.

Yea, e'en the simple Ass, the daily drudge
Of yonder wandering ignominious train,
The thistle champs along the common's edge,
And lightsome ease obliterates all his pain.
But chief, in freedom from the weary wain
Exulting, roams at large the bounding Steed ;
Light floats upon the breeze his flowing mane,
He snorts, he paws, he skims the flow'ry mead ;
The Sabbath day to him a day of joy indeed.

There too, his flock with care the Farmer feeds,
While yet his family lies reclined in sleep ;
This, on the part of labour, mercy pleads,
Labour, that still an early hour must keep.
And he that would to meditation deep,
Or exercise devout, his mind apply,
Will find the path a dreary, barren steep,
If drowsy slumber's hang upon his eye,
And nature unrefresh'd pour forth the languid sigh.

And down the vale, where, yet unmelted, fly
The morning clouds around his humble home,
Wrapt up in holy contemplation high,
Behold the week-worn Cotter slowly roam.
On every hand the fragrant flow'rets bloom ;
An hymn of joy in every thicket rings ;
Earth breathes a grateful off'ring of perfume,
While blithe the lark extends his dewy wings,
And, soaring up to heaven, a heaven-taught sonnet sings.

All this he ponders o'er with silent joy ;
With gratitude and love his heart o'erflows,
Yet grieved to think, that oft with base alloy
Is mix'd the tribute which his soul bestows.
In rev'rence deep, his head he humbly bows,
And lifts to Heav'n a supplicating eye ;
Great are his wants, but words their utterance lose ;
Dumb on his tongue his mighty cravings lie,
And burden'd sore, his soul pours forth a broken sigh.

And sighs are language, in th' all-gracious ear
Of Him who sits supreme on Mercy's throne,
Who kindly marks the penitential tear,
And of the broken sp'rit the faintest groan.—
The meltings of the heart, will He disown,
The heart enraptured with His goodness ? No—
A gracious answer to his sigh comes down,
Warm on his soul the streams of mercy flow,
And kindling in his breast, Heaven's holy ardours glow.

Now, in his love, his friends and family share ;
Before his God he spreads their every case,
Implores that he would make them all his care,
And fold them ever in his warm embrace ;
But chiefly for his little infant race,
As yet unpractised in the world's vile ways ;
That, by the influence of his special grace,
Conducted through life's dark and troubled maze,
(Their last end may be peace, their whole lives speak his
praise.

Nor end his fervours here—his native land,
So long the happy scene of gospel grace,
He prays that God would in his love command
For it a large and everlasting peace;
That on this day her sons may never cease,
While breathes the Spring, or Summer gilds the vale,
Or pensive Autumn shews her sallow face,
Or Winter rude, rides on the roaring gale,
Christ's triumph o'er Death, with raptur'd hearts to hail.

Untutor'd he, with philosophic ken,
Around the limits of the world to sweep,
To mark the manners strange of ruder men,
And sage-like tell what mystic rites they keep:
But he has heard, that o'er the troubled deep,
Beneath the deepening shade of forests brown,
The naked tribes, save when they wildly leap,
Like moody madness to the changing moon,
No blissful day of rest, no secret service own;

That blind at Superstition's awful shrine,
Others laid prostrate, drench'd in human gore,
The dreadful fiends of hell, supposed divine,
With fear and awful reverence adore;
While idle Flamens, boasting wizard lore,
In vain essay to read their future doom:—
The rite abhorred, the harsh rhyme mutter'd o'er,
Cheer not the lonely dwelling of the tomb,
Where doubt with horror reigns, in thick surrounding
gloom.

And with th' assembly great of the First-born,
Whose names are writ in heaven, in spirit join'd,
He prays that God, upon their case forlorn,
Would cast a healing look in mercy kind ;
And call his gracious covenant to mind,
His promise, that in desert streams shall flow,
And in wild wastes, where dragons dread reclined,
The healing herb, the shady reed shall grow,
In Sharon's blushing bloom, and Carmel's lively glow.

But, from his little cot, a curling cloud
Of smoke ascending, homeward tempts his way,
To bless his family, and to serve his God,
In all the sacred duties of the day.
As fanciful, let none despise the lay ;
Sweet gleams of pleasure true Devotion brings ;
But doubly sweet her animating ray,
When, round a family fire, Heaven's anthem rings,
And Hope exulting smiles, and Faith expands her wings.

The soul-exalting raptures who can tell,
Th' emotions dear, that warm the father's heart,
As, rising sweet, these strains of Zion swell
Around his little ring, devoid of art ?—
Perhaps, how God beneath Oppression's smart
Beholds the poor, and listens to their sighs ;
Or, how in wilds and deserts far apart,
To glad the thirsty soul that fainting lies,
He bids the flowerets spring, and bubbling streams arise.

Then gravely read, while all attentive hear,
Is some mark'd portion of the sacred word;
Perhaps, in Sinai's thirsty desert drear,
Or Arnon's brooks, the doing of the Lord.
Or how, when Persecution's cruel sword
Awoke, in burning fury to devour,
By Cherith's brook conceal'd, the Prophet's board,
The ravens, mission'd by Almighty power,
With bread and flesh supplied, at morn and evening's hour.

Or, when amidst the draught-consumed soil,
Their empty urns the fainting brooks deplore,
How the poor widow's little cruse of oil
For many a day supplied the unfailing store;
Or how the weeping bard the briny shower
Poured for the children of his people slain,
While low on earth, with ashes covered o'er,
Zion for help stretched forth her hands in vain,
A hissing and a scorn to spiteful foes profane.

Or how the mighty God, a child of days,
Was, lowly, in a humble manger laid,
How He, by whom these heavens in glory blaze,
At toilsome drudgery earned his daily bread;
Or how he came, while shook his friends with dread,
Majestic, walking on the weltering wave;
How, at his word, the fiends of darkness fled,
And wrenched Death's captives from the yawning grave,
Declared his mighty arm omnipotent to save.

Perhaps they read, while rapture-speaking tears,
Like glittering dew-drops, o'er their faces stray,
How, freed from all his woes and all his fears,
Death's bands he burst upon this hallowed day ;
And when his friends, desponding by the way,
With doubtful hearts deplored him from them torn,
How he drew near, and held, till twilight gray,
Discoursing how he thus behoved to mourn,
While kindling faith and love made all their hearts to burn.

Then, on their knees, with hearts sincere, they pray,
This JESUS evermore to be their guide,
Amidst the snares in life's bewildered way,
That, watchful, lurk unseen on every side ;
And in their lot, whatever may betide,
The sunny calm, or tempest howling high,
He in the cloudy-skirted storm may ride,
And whisper soft, as fainting low they lie,
"My friends, be not afraid, for see, behold, 'tis I!"

The humble meal is now in haste brought forth ;
No dainties smile upon their simple board ;
One homely dish each morn rewards their worth,
'Tis all they ask, and all they can afford.
Yet still, within their frugal pantry stored,
A savoury cheese remains, to grace the day
Of holy rest, when carking Care abhorr'd,
Wrapt in his cloud of darkness, shrinks away
Before the radiant rise of Hope's high-streaming ray.

Then, forth they go, for now before the door
The short'ning shadow marks the hour of nine ;
And by the broomy hill are coming o'er
Their village neighbours, glittering, clean and fine,
Upon the road, with neighbours, neighbours join,
And converse sweet beguiles the tedious way ;—
Some trace, in Nature's works, the hand Divine ;
Some through the flowery fields of Scripture stray,
And some, alas ! retail the nonsense of the day.

The sun burns bright—wide through the fervid air,
Of insect wings the hum unceasing flows ;
And stretched around, beneath th' oppressive glare,
The flowery field with dazzling splendour glows,
Adown the vale, beneath the shady boughs,
The herd seek shelter from the sultry beam ;
Or under yon tall rock, that, rising, throws,
All hoary, through the trees a dusky gleam,
Their panting sides they lave deep in the silver stream.

The peaceful valley smiles—with wanton glee
The hare leaps, playful, in the broomy shade ;
And clear the wild-wood strains of liberty,
All rapt'rous, sweep along the sunny glade.
With eyes of jet, and swelling bosom red,
The little Robin, flutt'ring, flits on high,
The russet Wren, beneath the brushwood hid,
Patters unseen, or on the careless eye,
Comes, like a falling leaf, in air light wavering by.

Sweet Nature's children ! these your haunts enjoy,
Nor yet, for me, one sportive round decline ;
No ruffian, I, your pleasures to destroy ;
No, brethren, no ! the God ye praise is mine.
But, ah ! what bands approach with fell design !
Their faces dark, with guilty horror brown ;
Nor song, nor service, is to them divine,
Nor holy times, nor tender ties they own,
The base, degenerate dregs of yonder smoky town.

Within their bosoms quenched the light of Heaven,
In vain would Pity cross their guilty way ;
The harmless creatures fly, in terror driven,
As, dark, they sweep along with ruthless sway.
The warbling Linnet drops the unfinished lay,
Frantic, to see her little nestlings torn
Forever from her eyes ;—full many a day,
With feathers ragged, drooping, all forlorn,
Her plaintive note shall flow from yonder milk white
thorn.

Nor there reposed, her woe-fraught strains in peace
Will cruelty allow her time to pour ;
Crashes the bush, wide floats its flowery fleece
As, aimed at her, resounds the stony shower :—
Thus, oft the Bard, in silence, must endure
The prideful pelting of the ruffian throng ;
Who spurn his holy flame, his feelings pure
And armed in self-adoring maxims, strong
Despise the charms of wit, and energies of song.

O ye, to whom indulgent Providence

Hath parcelled out this earth in portions fair,
Exert your power, keep strong the thorny fence,
And with the law's long lash, intruders dare.

The Blackbird's song shall well reward your care,

Amidst the dew-distilling months of Spring ;

Through Summer leafy, many a grateful pair

Shall cheer your lonely walks with social wing ;

Yea, there, through Winter wild, the Red-breast sweet
shall sing.

But now, at length, in view the church appears,

A Gothic pile, with moss-grown turrets gray,

The venerable work of other years,

Whom Time's swift lapse hath placed far away.

There, oft the sons, to prayer on such a day,

In troublous times, the fathers fond have led,

Who, peaceful now, beneath the silent clay,

Lie with the congregation of the dead,

Their feet for ay from toil, their eyes from sorrow hid.

How solemn to the eye the scene appears !

The yew—the porch, with pale Death's emblems
crowned,

And sable-railed, bedecked with pompous tears,

The rich men's tombs, that, gloomy, rise around ;

Of some, the smooth-hewn slab marks out the bound,

Preserving still the poor possessor's name,

Perhaps his years ; while level with the ground,

Many, by friendship mourned, unknown to fame,

Beneath the grass-green sod, no frail memorial claim.

Here, wrapt in thought, the poor man wanders wild,

And dark, the days of other years return ;

For underneath that turf, his darling child,

His first-born son, lies in the mould'ring urn.

He heaves a sigh, his heart begins to burn—

The rough grey stone still marks his fav'rite's head ;

And o'er him, beauteous in the breath of morn,

To all her children, Nature's bounteous mead,

With scarlet gayly tipt, the lowly daisies spread.

Child of my love ! confessed before my eye

Thou standest, fair in all thy blooming grace ;

Wild on the wind thy sunny ringlets fly,

And dawning goodness brightens on thy face.

I see ! I see thee in the sportive race,

Lured by the bright son of the summer beam ;—

I see thee, panting, drop the fruitless chase ;

For glittering, far adown the silver stream,

He floats on air away, as fades the nightly dream.

So faded thou !—for never sportive more,

Bloated and black, upon the bed of pain

I see thee laid :—thy short, short span is o'er—

A mournful proof that earth-born hopes are vain.

Yet, let me never pour the tear profane,—

Well hast thou 'scaped a wicked world of woe ;

The spurn of pride—Misfortune's driving rain,

And creeping chill, the baleful blast of snow,

From poverty's cold sky, hath never laid thee low.

Thou hast not heard the child of deep distress,
In bitter anguish, pour the deathful groan,—
Thou hast not seen, and yet couldst not redress,
Poor Misery, pining, friendless and alone.
Nor was it thine in sorrow to bemoan

A wandering childhood, and a wanton youth :—
Ere sin had gathered strength, lo ! thou wast gone,
Devotion's first note trembling in thy mouth,
Raptures for ay to drink before the throne of truth.

While thus he, pondering, pours the pious tear,
The congregation are assembled round,
And, widely echoed, swells upon his ear,
Of praise sublime, the sweetly solemn sound.
He joins to sing, with reverence profound,
Of God the power, the wisdom, and the grace,
Who, deep, impact, earth's strong foundations bound,
Heaved huge the hills, spread smooth the valley's
face,
And for the turbid deep barr'd strong the appointed place :

Who gives the Spring her robe of lightsome green,
Enwove with swelling buds and blooming flowers ;
And matron Summer's florid form to screen,
Umbrageous, hangs with leaves the woodland bowers ;
Who in the lap of widowed Autumn pours,
Rich, the collected treasures of the year,
And wings the sweeping blast, that angry roars
Round the hoar hill, or through the forest sear,
When, drift-clad, Winter stalks in gousty darkness drear :

Who in the storm, and in the pathless deep,
Mysterious, hath his unrevealed way ;
Whose fiat rolling worlds unnumbered keep,
And myriad hosts of Seraphim obey :
Who o'er the heavens, star-paved, can yet display
The curtains black of Horror's viewless throne ;
And if he look on earth, in wild dismay
It, trembling, like the chased roe is gone,
Or silly, wandering sheep, whom no man cares to own :

Who Zion's friend, her counsellor and king,
Hath glorious been, even from the times of old,
Watering her fields from life's clear-flowing spring,
Whence all her blossoms burn with living gold :
Who back the Red Sea's roaring surges roll'd,
When forth he led her from the land of slaves,
And, roused up, Egypt's dragon, blindly bold,
Pursued, presumptuous, through its pearly caves,
Till sunk, with all its pride, beneath the avenging
waves :

With cloud by day, by night with pillared flame,
Who in the howling desart was her guide ;
At whose command from dry rocks rivers came,
And foodful dews her daily bread supplied :
And glorious overshadowing far and wide,
Upon the mount of Ordinances seen,
Whose name is still,—The LORD, who will provide
Strength for the weak, rich portions for the mean,
With sanctifying grace for hearts and lips unclean.

Then, slowly rising suppliant, to heaven
The minister lifts up his hands on high ;
Rich with the light that ages past have given,
The fires of genius brighten in his eye.
But on his brow sits meek humility,
With holy love, and awful reverence joined,
In sight of Him, who, bending from the sky,
Beholds the humble soul with aspect kind,
But still, contemptuous, spurns the self-elated mind.

By him, to GOD their joint petitions rise,
Their guilt, with deep contrition, they confess,
And humbly pray, that He would turn his eyes
Upon them, in the dear REDEEMER'S face ;—
That face divine, that once in vile disgrace
Was marred, that guilty men might be restored
From Satan's grasp—from yawning hell's embrace,
Once more to bear the likeness of their Lord,
And in a loftier strain His matchless love record :

That He, who still declares himself to be
Of life, the living, true, substantial bread ;—
Bread for a starving world, and bread that he,
Who once partakes, no hunger more can dread,—
Would now in their assembly stand and feed,
In all the might and majesty of GOD ;
Administ'ring to Zion's sower, seed :
Breathing of grace the fructifying cloud,
And waking, warm, to blow the south winds, soft,
abroad.

And, as he stills the forest-rending wind,
Of seas, and all their waves, the stormy roar ;
So, speak conviction to the sinner's mind,
And bid corruption rage and rule no more :
And on the soul, in grief afflicted sore,
Temptation tossed, in darkness all forlorn,
The healing balm of consolation pour,
And rising, bright, his pathway to adorn,
Give heavenly Hope, arrayed in all the hues of morn.

Prayer ended--now the Scripture page is read,
And brief expounded to the simple Hind,
How, by the Serpent's guileful speech betrayed,
Our first grand Parent from the truth declined ;
By one rash act, himself, yea, all mankind,
To sorrow, toil, and death, delivering o'er.
Hence, wide o'er earth diffused, the hateful mind ;
Hence groans the leafy forest, tracked with gore ;
And hence, on wings of fire, wild wasting whirlwinds roar.

Hence, sad the little day of human life,
Perplexed with storms and cloudy darkness drear,
Is lost in empty wranglings, lawless strife,
Or, languid, damped with soul-subduing fear ;
While ever rises on the pensive ear
The bitter groan of unavailing woe,
The sigh, that ardent roams this lower sphere,
Haply to find where living waters flow,
Yet grasping shadows dim, in folly's meteor glow.

The wondrous love of God is then the theme,
A love which doth all knowledge far transcend
But which the meanest, trusting in his name,
In some degree are taught to comprehend,
Whence came the Lowly One, the poor man's friend,
And from his lips snatched wrath's red cup of gall,
Which drinking, he had laboured without end,
In direful den, shut up stern Justice' thrall,
Debarred Hope's beamy ray, or soothing Mercy's call

But He, though lowering death stood interposed,
At one full draught the dregs unshrinking wrung,
While round him fierce, in dreadful Phalanx closed,
Princedom and powers, rulers of darkness strong,
Who saw him laid the long lost dead among,
And numbered him with malefactors vile,
Presuming to have marred for ay the song,
That soothed through life the weary mourner's toil,
And gave at death's dread hour bright hope's triumphant smile.

Presumption vain—although earth's marble doors
Were closed upon him with the seal of power,
And, grimly, round a host vindictive lowers,
In gleamy steel, to make his prison sure.
No sooner was it come, the destined hour,
Than, Lord of Life, self-vigorous he awakes ;
Angels attend, whose looks like flame devour,
Astonished earth, convulsive heaving, shakes,
And shrunk, each watcher's heart with death-like terror quakes.

And gloriously triumphant, he came forth,
The spoils of death rejoicing in his train,
Heaven's broad seal thus upon his work and worth
Impress'd—and thus declared his endless reign.
His right, the heavenly mansions to retain
In sure possession, as his people's head,
His power, their cruel spoilers to restrain,
And through the dreary dwelling of the dead,
To glory's splendid realms their feeble feet to lead.

“Stranger to this consolatory hope !
Beware the Atheist's hiss, the Sceptic's sneer !
Here plain to all, save such as blindfold grope,
A future judgment-day is written clear.
Yes, sudden and tremendous shall appear,
Spread on the clouds of heaven, his burning throne ;
His voice shall yet resound in every ear
That lives, or e'er hath lived the earth upon ;
To him each knee shall bow, him every tongue shall own.

“That Jesus, now unworthy in your eyes,
How will ye meet when kindled is his ire !
When, conscience-roused, a dreadful fire shall rise,
And dash your souls with accusations dire ;
Creation burns immense, one sea of fire !
Worlds, suns and systems, burst with boundless roar !
Where will ye fly ? How will your dreams expire ?
Hurl'd down for ay your folly to deplore,
Where, hoarse, the waves of wrath still dash the sullen
shore

“To you in vain shall brighter worlds arise ;
These worlds, alas ! ye never can possess ;
Unspotted suns, and storm-untroubled skies,
Shall never beam upon unrighteousness.
O ! listen, while he stands with peaceful voice,
The great atoning High Priest full in view ;
His precious blood, his sanctifying grace,
He proffers free, with admonitions due
To faith, repentance, love and prompt obedience new.”

The preacher thus, with that becoming air,
Subjects so awfully sublime require,
Conjures his audience all, with many a tear,
To 'scape the vengeance of eternal fire.
To rest on God, who is the warm desire
Of those that fear him, faithful to fulfil ;
Who oft to rapture tunes the mourner's lyre,
Even when the rain of sorrow, falling chill,
Hath drench'd the flowers of hope that bloom on faith's
green hill.

The sermon closed—again in prayer they join ;
Prayer not preferr'd for sordid selfish ends :
But, drinking at the fount of Love Divine,
Wide as the world, their souls' warm wish extends,
And sweet, the grand prophetic song ascends :—
“Mercy is built forever firm and sure,
On God her strong stability depends,
And still her seed brought forth refined and pure,
Shall, as the sun in heaven, from age to age endure.”

Now westward driving far, with prone career,
The red-hair'd sun rolls on his fiery road ;
Gay, golden hues the green-topp'd mountains wear,
And deeper shades invest the waving wood.
When closed the sacred work, they come abroad,
Devoutly raised to holy rapture some ;
Some pond'ring dark, the fix'd decrees of God,
His awful wrath, the sinner's final doom,
With all the shadowy shapes that frown behind the
tomb.

Ah ! Christian, cease ! these dangerous themes forbear,
Or farewell, hope ! farewell, departing joy !
There, Frenzy wild, a legion in her rear
Of phantoms fell, lies lurking to destroy.
Surrounded once, in vain shalt thou employ
Thy powers, to force her dark entrenchments strong ;
No art can soothe, no argument annoy
Her baleful train, that thick and thicker throng,
Till crush'd, thy reason falls, in darkness stretch'd along.

Mark, yonder, where the bean-field fragrant blooms,
Diffusing grateful odours all around,
Woeful and wan the poor ALEXIS roams,
Within her mazy fetters mournful bound
His looks are ever fixed on the ground,
Despair's dark tear dim glistens in his eye ;
Now he stops short, now starts with sudden bound,
While, from his bosom bursts the rending sigh,
And hell and horror still accent his wailing cry

Upon his faded form, and gestures wild,
The lowing heifer stares with wondering gaze ;
And o'er him, sweet Devotion's ruin'd child,
Th' unconscious warbler mends his love-taught lays ;
The lark, descending in the sunny rays,
Bends down the flowery turf with slender feet,
His speckled breast, his rising plume displays,
The gently-breathing balmy breeze to meet,
And pours his raptur'd soul in warblings wildly sweet.

But what are warbling birds, or flowery fields,
To him whose heart stills bleeds, whose spirit grieves ;
Say, what the joy a smiling prospect yields,
When grim despair the web of terror weaves !
"Sing on," ALEXIS cries, "your happy lives,
Ye birds, are pure ; arise on spotless wing ;
Spurn earth, vile earth ! 'tis but a place of graves ;
Ah ! why should death your gentle bosoms wring ?
'Tis I—poor wretched I, have forged the fatal sting.

"Thy fires, O Vengeance ! in what corner hid ?
Thy victim, I thy speedy act implore !
Why hangs thy red bolt, Justice, o'er my head ?
Exact thy due, and I shall be no more.
In vain I call ! those skies must ever lower !
This dreadful shade, Remorse, still crush me down !
O Mercy, Mercy ! is thy season o'er ?
Will God forever, thus in anger frown,
And stalking terrors guard all access to his throne ?

" Yes, still to me—I see the dark decree,

Firm as the pillars of the eternal throne!

O Hope, sweet Hope! on all thy flowery tree

No blossom blows, to ease my dying groan."

Thus hapless, day by day, his life glides on:

Not so where Reason aids Religion's reign;

There, though the tempest howl, fair Hope, anon,

Far beaming, brightens Faith's immense domain,

Where free the soul expands, exults, and smiles serene

From church return'd, our simple Cotter see,

His babes around him innocently smile;

His Spouse, with looks of kind complacency,

Hastes to present again the frugal meal.

And as they eat, what text was read he'll tell;

What doctrines thence adduced, what sins reprov'd,

What motives given to cherish holy zeal,

What charming views to faith of her beloved,

And arms, wherewith to stand, in fiery storm, unmoved.

To him, their guide, they lend a willing ear,

While he, at large, instructs them as he can,

The path of truth to tread, their God to fear,

And thus fulfil the great design of man.

Nor sneer ye Sages, though unfit to scan

Your systems, jarring, intricate, and wild;

Some precious outlines of salvation's plan—

How man, far, far from happiness exiled,

By grace may be restored, he yet can teach his child.

Hence, from the mouth of babes, the song of praise
Ascends to heaven at eve, or dewy morn;
Hence, honest Honour, with unborrow'd rays,
In humble life the meanest may adorn.
Yes, oft the Hind, thus taught, can laugh to scorn
The varnish'd vices of the vulgar great,
And on the wings of Faith and Reason borne,
Soar far beyond the barriers of his state,
To blessings changing oft the rigours of his fate.

Parental teaching closed with fam'ly prayer,
Each seeks, for soft repose, the peaceful bed,
The Sire except, who, by the evening fair,
To muse along the greenwood side is led.
The setting sun, in robes of crimson red,
And purple gorgeous, clothes the glowing west;
While sober Eve, in misty mantle clad,
One bright star, lovely, beaming on her breast,
With feet all bathed in dew, comes slowly from the east.

Now closed, the daisy droops its dewy head,
Hush'd are the woods, the breathing fields are still;
And soft beneath the meadow's flowery pride,
Creeps, gurgling on its way, the mossy rill.
Sublimely solemn rolls the mingling swell,
At times, with many a mournful pause between,
Of streams, wild rushing down the sounding dell,
Of voices bursting wild from shapes unseen,
And flocks that distant bleat, far o'er the flowery green.

Fast follows on the cloud of night's dark noon,
And bright the fires of heaven begin to blaze ;
While o'er the misty mountain's head, the moon,
Pours, in a streaming flood, her silver rays.
White, on the pool, her radiance flickering plays,
Where shadows, faintly glimmering, shadows mar ;
And clear, the cottage window, to the gaze
Of solitary wanderer, gleaming far
Up yonder green hill side, appears a glittering star.

The poor man here, in converse with the sky,
Lone, o'er the uplands holds his wandering way ;
His bosom swells, he heaves the frequent sigh,
And tears start sudden, ere he well knows why.
'Tis nature melts him—verging to decay,
Through all her works, she pours the weary groan ;
Even now, by faith, he hails th' eventful day—
He hears the trump of God, the great white throne
Is raised, Creation melts, lo ! Heaven and earth are gone.

“And thou, my soul !” he cries, “shalt thou survive,
When, quench'd in years, these living fires shall fade ;
Yes, in immortal vigour thou shalt live,
And soar and sing when ev'ry star is fled,
For so hath GOD—GOD thy Redeemer said :
A higher song than seraph's shall be thine,
Yea, though in mould'ring clay this flesh be laid,
These very lips, with energy divine,
Heaven's high resounding harp in holy hymns shall join.

“To God, forever let thy song ascend,
Though stormy howlings sweep thy rugged path;
Though weeping Woe thy straighten'd steps attend,
And Sin thy green leaves soil with burning breath;
There yet remains a rest reveal'd to faith,
A rest from sin and all its dire distress;
A Sabbath sweet, beyond the realms of Death,
Bright with the beams of God's all-gracious face,
The gift of sovereign love, the rich reward of grace.”

Sooth'd with this sweet idea, he retires,
His brow serene with calm Contentment's smile,
To rest, till ruddy morning's glowing fires
Again awake him to his weekly toil.
FOUNTAIN OF GOOD! grant me to keep, the while
My span extends, thy Sabbaths thus alway;
My reason clear, my spirit free from guile:
And of thy light still shed a purer ray,
Till glory's sun arise in bright refulgent day.

POEMS.

THE following Poems, it is presumed, do not require any particular prefatory illustration. Should any object, that the Author's individual feelings and pursuits are rather too frequently introduced,—he is fully sensible that if his apology cannot be found in the occasions upon which they were composed, any thing he might here say in extenuation could have but little effect. He has attempted to describe as he felt; but of the strength or the accuracy of the description, he presumes not to judge: the reader will determine for himself. If he has in any instance violated moral propriety, or attempted to awaken feelings incompatible with Christian meekness and resignation, he is truly sorry; and where such an instance occurs, seeing it consists not with his knowledge, he hopes the reader's sympathy will at least keep pace with his censure.

TO
LABOUR.

LORD of the brawny limbs, the shoulder broad,
The weather-beaten look, the hand of horn,
Still let thy presence bless my low abode,
And sleepy sloth, with all her dreams, I scorn.

Enroll'd among the sons of servile toil
Ere yet my seventh year was fairly fled,
And still, though far be Fortune's easy smile,
With thee I grateful eat my daily bread.

Thy sober gait let tinsel'd fops deride,
Vile canker worms, that waste a nation's health;
Thou art my pleasure, and thou art my pride,
Meek virtue's guardian, and the guide to wealth.

Thine is the slumber sound, the tranquil mind,
From dreaming fear and frenzied fancy far ;
Thine all the peaceful arts that bless mankind,
And thine the dreadful thunderbolts of war.

Commerce by thee, her swelling sails unfurled,
Through trackless oceans arduous ploughs her way ;
And, linking in her golden chain the world,
Brings every social virtue into play.

Dreadful by thee, where e'er the rolling waves
Are restless heav'd against the rising shore ;
The pride of freemen, and the dread of slaves,
Britannia bids her naval thunders roar.

In humble life, with Liberty thy guide,
Thou competence assurest to the swain !
While light Content blythe frolics by thy side,
And Innocence, with all her white-rob'd train.

Happy with thee, I round the circling year
Have walk'd at harrow harsh, or weary plough,
Still pleased my eye, or soothed my ravish'd ear,
And danced my heart to nature's rapt'rous glow.

How sweet, with thee, to hail the lengthening day,
When gentle Spring awakes the sleeping flower,
And the blythe laverock trills his lively lay,
Though stinted oft by hail or sleety shower!

And sweet, with thee, to mark the kindling dawn
With fluid gold the mountain-tops illumine;
While on the west winds, o'er the dewy lawn,
The gladsome Summer breathes her rich perfume.

Nor less the pleasure, when the falling year,
The fading woods, the breezy morning chill,
Draws from the pensive peasant's eye the tear,
As 'lone he toils around the silent hill.

And when, in darkness, settled on the heath,
The stream, presageful, dashing down the dell;
Or, in his drifty robe, aroused in wrath,
Wild Winter rides the air with dismal yell:

Sweet is thy call, in peaceful barn, secure
From the rude blast, the sounding flail to wield;
While, in the heaps that foodful swell the floor,
Are lost the horrors of the joyless field.

And now, though far from all these happy scenes,
That ne'er can cease to heave my swelling heart,
With thee, in city pent, I draw the means
Of life among the sickly sons of ART ;

Complaint I scorn, although the silver moon,
That wont erewhile my nightly way to cheer,
Dim in the crowded alleys of the town,
Through dust and smoke a bloody globe appear.

Though purling streams no more attract my ear,
Nor merle's soft song, that e'en despair might charm ;
Though rich, the glories of the rural year,
No more my breast with rising raptures warm ;

While Love delights to wave his purple wings,
With playful peace to cheer my fireside ;
And my rude lyre bold independence strings,
Thou art my pleasure, and thou art my pride.

ON

HEARING A DECLAMATION

AGAINST

EVANGELICAL POETRY.

AH! Folly, wilt thou never cease to prate!
Rank venom oozing from thy serpent tongue,
That still with subtle wit, with sapience great,
And learned lore affectest to be hung?

When will the countless multitudes undone,
Bubbled by thee of aught like solid joy,
Teach man thy baleful eloquence to shun,
That charms to cheat, and dazzles to destroy?

With burning zeal and unabating toil,
In every walk of life thou roam'st abroad ;
But chief o'er all, thy aim is to beguile
The soul of all dependence on her God.

In thy opinion, nothing half so poor
As speak of man depraved, of saving grace ;
Faith, in thy creed, must turn her to the door,
And starched Morality take up her place.

Hence, should a good man openly express,
In Scripture-style, the feelings of his soul,
Thy wrath is quickly up, 'tis all grimace,—
A long close coat to hide intentions foul.

Hence, Frenzy draws from thee her dev'lish dreams,
And Sophistry, thy child, her cobweb chains,
And, puddled, hence Delusion's frothy streams,
Come, shallow, roaring from distemper'd brains.

Whence is it that the brutish gods of Greece,
Wicked confess'd, yet obstinately strong,
Each muse defiling, and each sacred place,
So long have ruled the rich realms of song ;

And, clamorous, when at length the voice of scorn
 Hissed of a part, to seek their native hell,
 And under rising Reason's beamy morn,
 Into thin air their tents of thousands fell ;—

Whence was it, that upon these fields of light,
 Grim godless ghosts, grey mists, and meteors green,
 With stormy spirits on the wing of night,
 Portentious all, in deepening clouds were seen ?

Whence but from thee ! lest in her gorgeous glow,
 Sublime descending from her native sphere,
 Truth there might give the flowers of heaven to blow,
 And rich, the streams of life to murmur clear.

Where, drinking deep, the enthusiast had been made
 To see a world he never saw before ;
 And, up through nature rising, had been led
 The God of grace by Jesus to adore.

For, ah ! if never purged the mental eye
 From the dark films of ignorance and sin ;
 If guilt still heavy on the conscience lie,
 And wayward passion rage and rule within ;

What is the landscape bold with hill and dale,
Tufted with groves, enriched with dimpling streams,
Though plenty linger on the dying gale,
And o'er it heaven diffuse its brightest beams?

Though clothed with lowing herds and nibbling flocks,
And shepherds laid by every osier'd rill;
Though rich with honey hang the clifted rocks,
And one wild hum the depths of ether fill?

Though, incense-fraught, the clouds salubrious rise
From breathing meadows milk-white to the view,
Or stretching far beneath unspotted skies,
Like fluid gold engem'd with silver dew?

His eye may, brute-like, roam the goodly scene,
And, thrilled, his nerves confess the powerful charm;
But should reflection, drowsy, wake within,
His secret soul will shake with wild alarm.

It speaks a power, which, if he sees, he dreads;
A purity, he cannot but abhor;
A mercy, but a mercy which provides
For alienated man no opening door.

In vain to him the Book of Providence
Is every day unfolding to the view ;
Along the lines he cast a casual glance,
And in the whole discovers nothing new.

In all the records of the human race,
Where, pictured, rise the deeds of other times,
His eye no line of prominence can trace,
Save human sufferings, caused by human crimes.

But he, who in the soul-reviving dews
Of Zion hath been taught at large to roam,
Of life's green tree the healing leaves to use,
Rich Gilead's balm, and Sharon's high perfume ;—

Sublimed, his visive powers, where'er they turn,
Discover something to the world unknown,
Some beam, that wakes the fires of love to burn,
Some good, that faith appropriates as its own.

A God, he hears in every passing wind ;
A God, how good ! he marks in every flower ;
A God, how great ! before him and behind,
Who wings with joy or grief the rising hour.

Hence, every gift to him is doubly dear,
With blessings following, secret, in its train;
Hence, lowering skies a milder aspect wear,
And sorrow soothed is eased of half her pain.

Hence, backward on the cloudy tract of time
Clear Reason, retrospective, turns her eye,
And ruling plots, restraining wrath, sublime,
God's hand is seen to be exceeding high.

Yea, hence, when dread the throne of Nature reels,
Enveloped dark in clouds and smouldering flame,
Safe in his arms the meek believer feels,
Who errs not, and whose love is still the same;

Who will before unnumbered worlds unfold,
At last assembled glorious round his throne,
Of Providence the hidden windings bold,
And all shall own the whole was wisely done.

Whate'er is thine, forever be it mine,
The grace through blessed JESUS to commend,
His praise to swell in every flowing line,
And, trusting in him, life at last to end.

TO

NOVEMBER.

NOVEMBER, hail ! thy look of woe,
Thy thin locks fleckered o'er with snow,
I prize above the garish glow
Of florid mirth and revelry.

Though no gay warblers hail thy morn,
Nor genial dew-drops gem the thorn,
Nor sunny flowers the vale adorn,
Profuse, in wild variety.

Afar, upon the hoary hill,
My wandering feet shall meet thee still ;
While loud the wild winds, raving chill,
Pipe strange their mournful melody.

Compared with thy swollen torrents' roar,
Or deep, thy billow-breaking shore,
Soft summer airs, how weak, how poor,
In all their wanton gaiety!

Before thy wan-dejected eye,
The visions light of Folly fly ;
And ever-pensive hovering night
Is weeping Pity found to be ;

By little wren, in russet coat,
Destraining wild her tuneful throat
Assisted by the red-breast's note,
In unison so pensively.

In lonely dell, oh ! who can hear
The dirge for the departing year
Perform'd beneath the last leaf sear,
Nor feel the glow of sympathy ;

Or, who the tuneful tribes can mark,
The lintie, merle, or soaring lark,
Discordant chattering, dull and dark,
Beneath thy harsh severity ;

Or rising weak, pale, modest, pure,
Sore chill'd beneath the sleety shower,
In faded field, the lingering flower,
Nor feel for pain and poverty?

Thy naked fields, thy leafless trees,
Sad sobbing to the swelling breeze,
Speak loud of age and thine disease,
That lead to dark mortality.

Of driving hoarse, in wrath severe,
Thy storms, unreign'd, destroy the year;
And oft on snowhills, rising drear,
Thou sitt'st in dread sublimity!

Thus Age, full oft, with dismal lower,
And sullen Want, with visage sour,
Drive fierce upon their victim poor,
The whelming tide of misery,

Yet often too thou canst display,
Though short, a warm and lively day,
That sweetly gradual melts away,
With pleasing soft sobriety,

Kind Heaven! my roots to tear at last,
Give not the rudely-roaring blast,
While fix'd in earth, yet firm and fast,
They cling with strange tenacity;

But, like November's melting day,
Thus, gradual, let my strength decay;
Then lift me soft at length away,
Unknown to pain, or penury.

And, musing pensive, while I hail,
November, slow thy mournful wail;
Let reason wake, let hope prevail,
Borne into bright futurity.

The falling year, though thus decay'd,
Her vigour gone, her verdure fled,
In thy cold mantle helpless laid,
Midst dread severity—

Shall, at the gladsome voice of Spring,
With strength renew'd, awake and sing,
While west-winds shake the balmy wing
O'er valley green and leafy tree.

Let Faith divine! thus through the gloom,
 That shadowy overhangs the tomb,
 See rising bright in purple bloom,
 The morn of Immortality!

So life's November drawing near,
 My spirit unappall'd may hear,
 In hope to change time's prospects drear
 For raptures through eternity.

DIRGE,

TO A PERSON WHO LAMENTED THAT NO MONUMENT
HAD BEEN ERECTED ON THE GRAVE OF

ROBERT BURNS.

WHY sigh'st thou, my friend ! for a monument great,
To point where the poet fills, cold, the clay urn,
Whom nature profuse, in a peasant's estate,
Gave with all the bold ardour of genius to burn ?
Drest in sight-soothing green, still the spot shall be
shown,
And a tear to bedew it each swain shall bestow,
While, sad, he laments that by folly undone,
In the cold tomb he lies, all untimely laid low !

While Winter hangs, hoary, with craneuch the thorn,
While gowans glint through the green garment of
May,
While the sweet-smiling June the gay rose-buds adorn,
And o'er ripe fields of corn, while September winds
play,

His powers of description each bosom shall own,
Consenting emotions their wonder shall show ;
But the sigh shall be heard, for, by folly undone,
In the cold tomb he lies, all untimely laid low !

And while Liberty deigns to make glad our green isle,
And the bold Briton drinks at her clear-flowing
stream,
When roused by the coward insults of the vile,
His anger is up, and his arms dreadful gleam !
Then the strength of the strains of our Bard shall be
known,
In a torrent of fire it shall burst on the foe !
But the hero shall weep ; for, by folly undone,
In the cold tomb he lies, all untimely laid low !

While the trust of the poor man is placed upon heaven,
While devotion the breasts of the wise can inspire,
While to virtue and calm contemplation is given
In his works the Creator to see and admire ;
His "Cottar" shall live—But the good shall bemoan,
And the warm tear of pity unceasing shall flow ;
For by error bewilder'd, by folly undone,
In the cold tomb he lies, all untimely laid low !

ON

VISITING SOME SCENES OF MY YOUTH.

SCENES of love and peaceful joy,
Where, a simple shepherd boy,
Far from pining Care's annoy,
Light my days were wont to flee!

Far although my steps have been
In pursuit of pleasure keen,
Skies so clear, and fields so green,
Never yet have dawned on me.

Round whene'er I turn my eyes,
Linked by strange mysterious ties,
Scenes of youthful transport rise,
Fair in sweet simplicity.

Wimpling down the green-sward hill
Overhung with wild-flowers still,
From its fount the crystal rill
Murmurs sweetest melody.

Blooms the bank, with gowans gay,
Edged with scroggy willows gray,
Where my flock at falling day
Used to pasture pleasantly.

Rises still the rough grey stone,
Where I marked the evening sun,
Splendors burning round his throne;
Set in glorious majesty.

Still the willow-shaded stream,
Dim, emits a smoky gleam,
Where full oft the pageant dream
Steeped my soul in ecstasy.

Warmed, I mark the bleak blown hill,
Where autumnal breezes chill,
In my breast the melting thrill,
Waked so soft, so pensively;

Where, at easy leisure laid,
In the thrash-bush sighing shade,
Rapt, in HENRY's Lays, I read
WALLACE' peerless chivalry ;

Till, unfelt my station poor,
Hid my "destiny obscure,"
Fancy burned for manhood's hour,
Great like him renowned to be.

For my lot in desart placed,
Running all my days to waste,
Yet no gloomy thought had traced
In the hues of misery.

Light I hailed the joyous team,
Light, beneath October's beam,
Marked the sickle's dewy gleam,
Cheered with jest and jollity.

Finding then, nor fearing guile,
Soothing soft my little toil,
Every face, with friendly smile,
Beamed in kind complacency.

Time ! relentless and severe !
Driving still with harsh career,
Proofs most strong are written here
Of thy mutability.

All unknowing and unknown,
Here I find to mark me none,
Save where jealousy looks on,
Dreading secret villainy.

Blue the smoke as heretofore,
Wreathing, curls the green trees o'er ;
But the hospitable door
Opens not to welcome me.

Never more shall meet me there,
She, who to the mistress' air,
Watchful, joined a mother's care,
Still so soft, so tenderly :

No—in solemn silence laid,
Low she rests among the dead,
From the storms forever hid,
Dark, that dim mortality.

And upon the very spot,
Where was cast her active lot,
Passed her deeds—her worth forgot,
Perished even her memory.

Spirit pure ! in bliss divine !
Vain the attempt for verse of mine
Here thy virtues to enshrine,
Child of meek humility !

Yet, to fame if worth impart
Title true, thy feeling heart,
Manners pure devoid of art,
Justly claim celebrity.

Ne'er can I forget the hours,
Closed upon the storm the doors,
When, unlocked, thy mental stores
Streamed with sage garrulity ;

'Touching many an ancient say,
Useful for life's troublous day,
Many a precious roundelay,
Many a tale of piety ;

Then, engaged, my thoughtless youth
Caught spontaneous from thy mouth,
Warm, the rapt'rous strains of truth,
Rich, that glad eternity.

Scenes beloved ! a last adieu !
Oft shall fancy turn to you,
Marking morn her silver dew
Shower in mild serenity ;

And in pure autumnal sky,
Warm, the great sun blazing high,
While the red moor's purple dye
Streams around most gorgeously.

Till, sublimed, my spirit rise
Far above these shifting skies,
Where created beauty dies,
Lost in vast infinity.

TO

THE BLACKBIRD,

IN WINTER, 1799.



SWEETEST Minstrel of the grove.!

Whither heedless dost thou rove?

Urged by want, alas! to prove

Man's unfeeling treachery.

Late thy voice, what time the dawn

Kindled o'er the dewy lawn,

Or her curtains eve had drawn,

Poured the stream of melody.

Now, within thy leafless bower,

Stilly silence sits demure,

Save when cold the sleety shower

Wakes the howl of misery.

Winter pale, with lowering eye,
Beaming from the clear blue sky,
Snowhills round thee heaving high,
Damp thy love of liberty.

Owrie by the pathway side,
Lone, I mark thee wandering wide,
Waiting haply to provide
For thy pinching penury;

While the clown, in shooting graith,
Points at thee the leaden death;
Or, concealed in hungry wrath,
Badrons marks thee feebly flee.

Sweepings from the cottage door,
Winnowings from the thrashing floor,
Life to save, a morsel poor
Lords of earth deny to thee.

Or if this be, free, thy fare,
Let thy simple feet beware,
Lest, concealed, the wavy snare
Yawn with base duplicity;

Caught in which, thy wings are vain,
Vain thy sorrow-soothing strain ;
Sold for sordid love of gain,
Death alone shall set thee free.

For my heart is pained to tell,
O'er misfortune's victim fell
Woe's full tide will ever swell,
Roused by selfish villainy.

Pleasure's soft and sunny bower
Every heart to charm has power,
But the cold look, sullen, sour,
Waits on poor necessity.

Ah ! how many now engage,
Lonely 'midst the winds of age,
Fierce, in unrelenting rage,
Scorn, neglect, and poverty.

Matched with such, thy state how blest !
Spring, arrayed in flowery vest,
Soon shall heave thy throbbing breast
With its wonted gaiety.

But the heart once rudely torn,
Deep with cares and sorrows worn,
Bright, the joy-renewing morn,
Here can never hope to see.

All its wish is to be laid
With the long forgotten dead,
Where, until these heavens are fled,
Slumbers shall unbroken be,

TO
APRIL, 1808.

WHY, April, thus clouded in woe comest thou forth,
With aspect so wintry and drear,
While, roaring around thee, the winds of the north,
Fill our hearts with amazement and fear?

Thy cheek once so rosy, in soft dimples drest,
As sickly December is pale ;
The cold zone of January binds up thy breast,
And thy locks rattle stiff to the gale ;

The cowslip, that wont gay to grace thy green steps,
Shrinks back from thy cold icy tread ;
And clamour discordant the lone forest keeps,
For the loves from thy presence have fled.

Even the lark, lofty soaring, in ecstasy high,
Accustomed thy welcome to sing,
Desponding and feeble drops down from the sky,
While the craneuch hangs hoar on his wing.

By thy hoarse voice aroused, all the months of the year
Thy progress with terror attend,
And the meek eye of Autumn is dim with a tear,
Lest famine be hers in the end.

Ah! where are thy west winds, thy soft sunny showers
Which erst we have felt and have seen;
Thy balm-breathing buds, and thy gay spreading flowers,
That were wont to enamel the green?

O, April, relent!—o'er the glebe and the grove
Thy life-cheering lustre display,
And full in glad chorus let rapture and love
Enliven the clear sunny day.

So Labour, unceasing, his path shall pursue,
While ardour illumines his eye:
And Hope's sunny visions, expanding in view,
Awake him to ecstasy high.

So, richly embroidered, her robe of green leaves
Shall Summer as usual display,
And, laden with fruit, yellow Autumn her sheaves
Shall build up in goodly array.

So, hirpling and hoary, to shut up the year,
When Winter shall, lowering, attend,
His grim face the poor man shall mark without fear,
Seeing Plenty stands by as his friend.

O'er his humble-roofed home while the rude winds are
roaring,
And labour the season denies,
The fields of Content with devotion exploring,
His converse shall be with the skies ;

Till balmy the west winds, the brown spotting thows
O'er the stern bands of Winter prevail,
And lead him again with the gay whistling ploughs,
Thy coming, sweet April, to hail.

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PSALM 137.

In reading the 137th Psalm, the author has often recollected the "Flowers of the Forest;" and fancying a similarity, however remote they may be in some points of view, between the Bards, each bewailing the ruin of his country, he imagined their feelings might fitly flow in the same exquisite air. Under this idea the following version has been attempted.

B_Y the clear streams of Babel, in woe we sat weeping,
When the low state of Zion arose on our minds ;
Our harps, once so tuneful, in dread silence sleeping,
On the green willow trees idly waved in the winds :
For, scoffing, our cruel despoilers required
The clamour of mirth, and the words of a song ;
Even a song that had often, by rapture inspired,
Re-echoed the green groves of Salem among.

But how, thus surrounded with darkness and danger,
Afar, by the harsh hand of slavery abhorred,
Driven to seek for our bread in the land of the stranger,
O! how shall we sing the rapt song of the Lord!
My heart yearns, O Zion! if e'er I forget thee,
Let vigour and skill leave my harp-waking hand;
Beneath my chief joy what time I may set thee,
Thenceforward my tongue let dread silence command!

Remember, O Lord, how the children of Edom,
When dark upon Zion descended the day,
That levelled her towers, and bereaved her of freedom,
Raze, raze her foundations! did spitefully say.
Thou, daughter of Babel, the storm hovers o'er thee,
Which, bloody descending, thy pride shall abash;
The waster is blessed, who waits to devour thee,
Relentless, thy children in pieces to dash!

PSALM 133.

BEHOLD! how delightful it is,
In palace, in cot, or in cell,
United in concord and peace,
For brethren together to dwell!

Like holy oil pour'd on the head,
Which Aaron's investment did show,
And plentiful, thence overspread,
To the skirts of his garment did flow.

As the dew on green Hermon descending,
The clear dew on Zion that glows;
For God, there his blessing commanding,
The life everlasting bestows.

ISAIAH.

CHAP. XXXV.

Lo ! the solitary place,
On a time shall yet be glad ;
Parch'd desarts shall rejoice
In the rose-bud's beauty clad.

Lofty singing, they shall bloom,
Fair in Carmel's verdant glow,
Mingling Sharon's rich perfume
With Lebanon's gorgeous show.

In his wonders spread abroad,
Glorious they the Lord shall see ;
Yea, of our most gracious God
The sublime excellency.

Strengthen ye the heart that's failing,
The weak hand, the feeble knee ;
Lo ! your God, he comes with healing,
And his vengeance all shall see.

Open'd then the blinded eye,
Open'd then the closed ear,
Hues of glory shall descry,
Words of life with rapture hear.

As an hart the lame shall leap—
From the dumb shall songs arise ;
Rushing streams, with grateful sweep,
Burning desarts shall surprise.

Parched ground with pools shall flow,
Thirsty land with water-springs,
Grass, with shady reeds, shall grow,
Dread where dragons spread their wings.

Broad a highway shall be there,
Smooth the way of holiness,
Where the foolish shall not err,
Where no foot unclean shall pass.

There no lion shall be found,
There no ravenous monster prowl;
But, on pilgrim journey bound,
Safe shall walk the humble soul.

Of the Lord, each ransom'd one
Zion's height shall thus attain;
Where, in transport round the throne,
Endless joy shall banish pain.

SONG.

CALDER BRAES.

BRIGHT be the bloom of Calder Braes,
There, lightsome, glide the sunny days,
And there, by night, the moon's pale rays
Keep aff black darkness dreary.

There let the rosy-bosom'd Spring
Her choicest sweets together bring,
While round her, wild, on wanton wing,
Her children flutter cheery.

There, balmy, let the Summer breeze
Sough soft amang the birken trees,
Where, stretch'd, the shepherds pipe at ease,
Unken'd to care sae bleary.

And there, from Plenty's flowing horn,
Let yellow Autumn pour her corn,
That hinds the coming wintry morn
May see, nor tremble eerie.

For there young Fancy's beamy rays,
Shone bright upon my infant days,
Ere yet I dream'd life's thorny ways
Had been sae waefu weary.

Companions of my artless glee !
Sweet laughing imps ! now where are ye ?
Wish'd manhood's come—but, ah ! like me,
Ye sigh life's paths are briery.

No longer playful in the stream,
Ye, paddling, con the flowery them ,
Nor wild-flowers string, and fondly dream
Your days shall rise thus clear ay.

No ; far behind yon rising wave,
The storms of life, ye, wandering, brave,
Save one or two, who here a grave
Found ere their feet were weary.

Departed friends ! upon your tomb,
Be still the wild-flowers seen to bloom,
There evening breathe her sweet perfume,
And shed the silent tear ay.

With you, this wildly throbbing breast,
Deep worn with care, with sorrow prest,
Would glad in silence sink to rest,
From strife and toil sae weary.

But in my heart, with life's warm tide,
Thou, Calder, still shalt dimpling glide,
And there thy braes in flowery pride
Shall rise for ever cheery.

And still my ardent wish shall be,
That plenty, love, and social glee,
In concert sweet, may keep with thee,
A refuge for the weary.

BRAES OF CALDER, *October, 1807.*

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SONG.

Tune—"Gramachree."

ADMIRING Nature's simple charms,
I left my humble home,
Awhile my country's peaceful plains
With pilgrim step to roam.
I mark'd the leafy summer wave,
On flowing Irvine's side,
But richer far's the robe she wears,
Within the vale of Clyde.

I roamed the braes of bonny Doon,
The winding banks of Ayr,
Where flutters many a small bird gay,
Blooms many a floweret fair ;

But dearer far to me the stem
That once was Calder's pride,
And blossoms now, the fairest flower,
Within the vale of Clyde.

Avaunt! thou life-repressing north!
Ye withering east-winds too!
But come, thou all-reviving west,
Breathe soft thy genial dew;
Until at length, in peaceful age,
This lovely floweret shed
Its last green-leaf upon my tomb,
Within the vale of Clyde.

MUIRKIRK, *July*, 1806.

NOTES.

NOTES.

Note I.

*There too, his flock with care the Farmer feeds,
While yet his family lies reclined in sleep.—P. 12.*

In places of the country where enclosures have not been yet introduced, it is common for the master, on Sabbath mornings, to take charge of the cattle, while the rest of the family are allowed an hour or two longer for sleep. This gives the Sabbath morning a peculiar zest, particularly to the herd (who is, for the most part, but a child) and the cattle; the master's superior skill and care generally leading them into corners which they see only on the seventh day, and, consequently, where the pasture is luxurious.

Note II.

*And with th' assembly great of the First born,
Whose names are writ in heaven, in spirit joined.*

Page 15.

The man who can look calmly around him on a Sabbath morning, beholding every thing quiet, and at rest, the whole creation entering, as it were by anticipation, on that state of deliverance from the bondage of corruption, which, an apostle hath assured us, is reserved for it against another day, nor feel disposed to add a note to the harmony that spontaneously breaks forth on every hand, has certainly but a small portion of devotional feeling: And he who can enter upon his devotions in such a situation, without reflecting that, in the act, he is associated with angels and archangels, with the whole church militant on earth, and with the church triumphant in glory, has views less extensive than his station ought to afford, and his privileges to inspire: And he who, amidst all this, can forget the millions of human beings that are sitting in darkness, bowing down to stocks, and sacrificing to devils, while the sum of their misery is augmenting every hour, has but little claim to the feeling that ought to characterise the man, far less to that exalted philanthropy which is an unfailing attendant upon genuine Christianity.

Note III.

*But, from his little cot, a curling cloud
Of smoke ascending, homeward tempts his way,
To bless his family, and to serve his God,
In all the sacred duties of the day.—Page 15.*

While it is matter of lamentation, that many, intoxicated with the fumes of a godless philosophy, casting off fear, and restraining prayer, have converted the Sabbath into a day of revelrous dissipation, upon which, in the haunts of lewdness, they are assimilated to the spirits who inhabit, and ripened for the possession of, that world of anguish, to which, if Omnipotence prevent not, they are hastening; it is matter of rejoicing, that many, called to glory and virtue, seek for the good old paths where their fathers walked, and, through exceeding great and precious promises, being made partakers of a divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world, find them to be, indeed, paths of pleasantness and peace.

It is not, by this, meant to be insinuated, that the Sabbath should be always met in sables, or that, in order to keep it, a man must be shut up in a darkened chamber, and give himself up wholly to sighing and tears. No: it is a day that calls for active exertion, for lively and grateful commemoration; a day, above all others, when our bread ought to be eaten with joy, and our wine drunk with merry hearts; when our heads ought to be white, and our garments to lack no ointment, seeing we celebrate not only a world created, but a

world redeemed. And, as an elegant writer hath observed, "Surely an entire day should not seem long amidst these various employments. It might well be deemed a privilege thus to spend it, in the more immediate presence of our Heavenly Father, in the exercises of humble admiration and grateful homage; of the benevolent, and domestic, and social feelings; and of all the best affections of our nature, prompted by their true motives, conversant about their proper objects, and directed to their noblest ends. All sorrows mitigated; all cares suspended; all fears repressed; every angry emotion softened; every envious, or revengeful, or malignant passion expelled: and the bosom, thus quieted, purified, enlarged, ennobled, partaking almost of a measure of the heavenly happiness, and become, for a while, the seat of love, and joy, and confidence, and harmony."—WILBERFORCE *on Christianity*, p. 126.

Note IV.

Then, forth they go, for now before the door

The short'ning shadow marks the hour of nine.—P. 18.

In remote situations, there are many families who have no mode of ascertaining the progress of time but by the shadow of the house, which, at particular times of the day, they mark in particular directions; and, by experience, come to know, when the sun shines, the hour of the day with great precision.

Note V.

But, ah, what bands approach with fell design !—p. 19.

Noisome bands of this kind are, every sunny Sabbath, to be met with in all directions, within a day's journey of any considerable city ; and they may be divided into the three following classes.

First, The class here immediately alluded to, consisting of prodigal sons, vagabond apprentices, and decayed sportsmen ; who, as their aim is plunder, nests, wild berries, pease, turnips, &c. are generally first at the road, and have the most loathsome appearance.

Secondly, Your city poets and politicians, who take their Sabbath walks in order to lay in rural imagery ; recite to one another the productions of the last week ; feed the fires of genius ; and display their oratorical powers in some hedge-alehouse ; from which they may be seen returning at night, generally drunk. The members of this class have, for the most part, a strutting consequential air, and look with great contempt upon the poor peasantry whom they observe still keeping up, as they imagine, the foolish practice of going to church.

Lastly, Your dashing clerks, shopmen, &c. generally driving three in a gig, drawn by an old wind-broken hack, if not with the speed, with all the fury of the son of Nimshi. These are altogether gentlemen ! and see no person whatever upon the road ; but may often be seen, when they have exhausted their finances feeding themselves, without being able to extend the same privilege to the horse, driving home on foot, cursing in

concert, though very causelessly, the poor animal and its owner, but flogging it up by rotation.

All of these, the author is of opinion, not to speak of their souls, (as they might start at the imputation of possessing souls,) ought, for the good of their bodies, every first day of the week, to be delivered over to the care of the constables.

Note VI.

Ah, Christian, cease! these dangerous themes forbear.

Page 29.

Mankind, in general, have a singular itching after secrets, and not a few have the temerity to attempt prying into the hidden counsels of the Eternal. This presumptive disposition, it may be presumed, has been the fruitful source of all the metaphysical jargon which has overrun the fields of philosophy, whence it is sometimes introduced into the more elevated regions of divinity. Once infected with this disease, the person immediately sets about "understanding all mysteries," and the consequences commonly correspond to the wisdom of the undertaking.

The practice of the late Mr. John Newton, (who, in all that respects the Christian life, may be regarded as an able counsellor,) with respect to the origin of evil,—a subject, the investigation of which has conducted some to bedlam, and not a few to the no less melancholy regions of scepticism,—the author would humbly recommend, as a sovereign antidote to this dangerous

propensity. "Many," says he, "have puzzled themselves about the origin of evil : I observe there is evil, and that there is a way to escape it, and with this I begin and end."—*CECIL'S Life of Newton*, p. 246.

Note VII.

*Thy sober gait let tinsel'd fops deride ;
Vile canker worms, that waste a nation's health !*
Page 37.

It is hoped that none will, from this, suppose the author to have imbibed the spirit of some raving philosophers, who, for the perfecting of government and of human nature, would have all men reduced to the necessity of subsisting themselves by manual operations. Such a dream reduced to practice, he has no doubt, would be the perfecting of human misery, as far as it could be perfected in this mortal state. But, while the opulent orders of society are left in the full possession of all their immunities, the lowly child of labour ought not to be robbed of that honour which his usefulness certainly merits. He is always, indeed, supposed to be very dependent ; and, in times like the present, [1808,] he will feel himself to be so in no small degree. He has, however, no reason, on that account, to think the less of that station in which Providence hath placed him ; nor to aggravate the evils of his condition by unavailing murmurs, and misplaced attempts to arrive at situations either unattainable, or which, though attained, could not perhaps add to his happiness.

His table may show no luxuries, yea, in necessities may be poorly provided, but such as it is he uses it with freedom. Conscience rises not up, in the terrors of incensed Deity, to say of this,—It is the bread of idleness; of that, it is the cup of deceit, has been wrung out by the unrelenting hand of oppression, and another day will I require it.

He may, at times, meet with the sneer of ignorance and pride; men of the weakest intellect, and the most contemptible morals, may treat him as a being altogether of an inferior order: but when he reflects, that the honour lies not in the part to be performed, but in the manner of performance, contempt will take place of anger, and pity at length supplant both. If he is emulous of greatness, and has any taste for the true sublime in character, revelation will inform him, that “greater is he that hath rule over his own spirit, than he that taketh a city;” and philosophy will assure him, that if, in the system of society, others form the arch and the embellishments, he is the pillar upon which they must be founded; if they are the wheels by which the finer operations are performed, and the hands which accurately point out the result, he is the spring which keeps the whole in motion.

Nor can it detract any thing from his true dignity, that this is either not generally known, or if known, is not willingly admitted; the sun loses nothing of his splendour though the clouds arising from the earth be at times too gross for his beams to penetrate. And, upon the whole, what are the paltry distinctions of time to

him, who is the heir of eternity? What the opinions of men to him, who has in view the melting elements, the descending heavens, assembled worlds, and the throne of the Eternal?

Note VIII.

*Faith, in thy creed, must turn her to the door,
And starched Morality take up her place.—Page 42.*

Faith, as it is a distinguishing principle in the Christian system, and must form the foundation of all acceptable practice, has been assailed with unrelenting animosity by the enemies of revealed truth in every age. It has been assaulted with Socratic ingenuity and Ciceronian vigour, with the curruscations of wit and humour poured forth with all the poignancy of ridicule, by the learned, the great, and the gay, while cur-like yelping, in wretched doggerels, the pitiful poetaster has brought up the rear, and rendered the army complete. It still, however, remains "The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Still, "by it being justified, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Still, "by it, righteousness is wrought, and promises obtained" And still it remains an immutable truth, that "No man is justified by the law in the sight of God; but the just shall live by his faith."

The enemies of this article of divine truth have a most disingenuous practice of representing it as something that stands opposed to, and is incompatible with morality. But let it be remarked, that the faith inculcated in the

Holy Scriptures, and for which we plead, is a faith which worketh by love, and purifieth the heart; and whatever a man's pretensions may be, if he is destitute of morality, the Scriptures warrant us to say, that to true faith he is as yet a stranger.

Note IX.

*Whence is it that the brutish Gods of Greece,
Wicked confessed, yet obstinately strong,
Each muse defiling, and each sacred place,
So long have ruled the rich realms of song.—P. 42.*

It is astonishing to observe the inflexible constancy which the Parnassian brotherhood have displayed, with regard to the Greek mythology; the wretched fables of which, they have been content to retail from one another, in nearly the same words, for three thousand years. Attempts have, indeed, been latterly made by some bolder spirits to introduce the blood-drinking deities of Scandinavia; and one, distinguished among his fellows for lofty pretensions, haughty and distorted demeanour, has, between Grecian and Gothic story, generated a new race of terribles, consisting of local and independent, though, feeble divinities, thin ghosts, self-existing in gray clouds, rising from the reedy lake, or in the thickening storm, howling wild along the hills of heath, green meteors, &c. dancing over the white waves, as they toss to the wind their heads of foam. The Hall of Woden is, no doubt, a very glorious place, and drinking the blood of one's enemies out of these very enemies skulls, must be allow-

ed, in a warlike age like the present, to be also a glorious employment! Deities which fall asunder by the stroke of a mortal, "like a column of smoke, which the staff of the boy disturbs as it rises from the half-extinguished furnace, though they inspire no love, as they excite no fear, may also be tolerated. But the idea of thin ghosts, shone through by stars, blown about by winds, or sighing over the chill and reedy lake, though it wants the fire and brimstone, seems little more favourable to sleep, (the fashionable futurity of the present day,) than the vulgar hell of Christianity; while the green meteors, &c. have all its superstition; so neither of them can be long endured. Even the sublimity of Woden's rites, cannot bring him generally into favour. The bard, over his bottle, still invokes the rosy Bacchus. The love-sick rhymster complains still of the cruelty of Cupid; and the simpering sonneteer, in celebrating his mistress, finds it still easy and convenient to compare her with Venus rising from the deep green wave.

The end of poetry, it has been said, is to please; and in order to please, fiction has also been supposed necessary. The most interesting poets, however, the writer is of opinion, will be found to be those whose fictions, if fictions they must be called, come nearest the truth. Who that possesses either reason, taste, or feeling, would lay aside the *Paradise Lost* of Milton, the *Night Thoughts* of Young, or the more delightful *Task* of Cowper,* to

* These are not enumerated with the design of detracting from the merit of others. The author could

attend to the genealogies of Hesiod, the squabbling divinities of Homer, or the senseless Metamorphoses of Ovid?

"When I consider," says Cowley, who was undoubtedly one of the brightest ornaments of the age in which he lived, "how many bright and magnificent subjects the Holy Scriptures proffer to poesy; in the wise managing and illustrating whereof, the glory of God Almighty might be joined with the singular utility, and noblest delight of mankind; it is not without grief and indignation that I behold that divine science employing all her inexhaustible riches of wit and eloquence, either in the wicked and beggarly flattery of great persons, or the unmanly idolizing of foolish women, or the wretched affectation of scurril laughter; or, at best, on the confused and antiquated dreams of senseless fables and metamorphoses. Amongst all holy and consecrated things, which the devil ever stole and alienated from the service of the Deity, as altars, temples, sacrifices, prayers, and the like, there is none that he so universally and so long usurped as poetry. It is time to recover it out of the tyrant's hands, and to restore it to the kingdom of God, who is the father of it. It is time to baptize it in Jordan, for it will never become clean by bathing in the waters of Dasmascus." "There is not," continues he, "so great

name even living poets, were it not that they might resent praise from his humble pen as an affront, whom he regards as having equal claims upon public gratitude, and whom he earnestly wishes may be long spared in the exercise of their talents, and the enjoyment of that applause they have so honourably acquired.

a lie to be found in any poet, as the vulgar conceit of men, that lying is essential to good poetry."

That he did not, however, suppose religious poetry of easy acquirement, nor allow that it should be written in a slovenly manner, the following will evince:—"All the books of the Bible are either already most admirable and exalted pieces of poesy, or are the best materials in the world for it. Yet though they be in themselves so proper to be made use of for this purpose, none but a good artist will know how to do it; neither must we think to cut and polish diamonds with so little pains and skill as we do marble. For if any man design to compose a sacred poem, by only turning a story of the Scripture, like Mr. Quarl's, or some other go-by matter like Mr. Haywood, of angels into rhyme, he is so far from elevating of poesy, that he only abases divinity.

"In brief, he who can write a prophane poem well, may write a divine one better; but he who can do that but ill, will do this much worse. The same fertility of invention; the same wisdom of disposition; the same judgment in observance of decencies; the same lustre and vigour of elocution; the same modesty and majesty of number; briefly, the same kind of habit is required to both, only this latter allows better stuff, and therefore would look more deformedly if ill drest in it."

Note X.

By error bewilder'd, by folly undone, &c.—Page 54.

The poverty of poets has been proverbial, and their unhappy lives a subject for declamation time immemorial

Every age has heard, with pleasure, its predecessor arraigned and condemned, for cruelly neglecting some hopeful child of genius, whom a little attention would have rendered comfortable, and who, in return, might have instructed, delighted and honoured his country, by the happy exertion of his talents. But while the sentence is passing, some unhappy child or children of rhyme are running their dissipated career, and already approaching that miserable catastrophe, that shall lay a foundation for a similar charge, and a similar sentence in the ages to come.

The truth is, that between poverty and poetry, patronage and happiness, there exists no necessary connection. The poets, most distinguished for excellence, have, the greater part of them at least, been in easy circumstances; and the most remarkable for wretchedness, will be found to have enjoyed no small share of patronage; while their works, but that the tale of their woes still excites curiosity, would, in all probability, for the greater part, long ago have been totally forgotten.

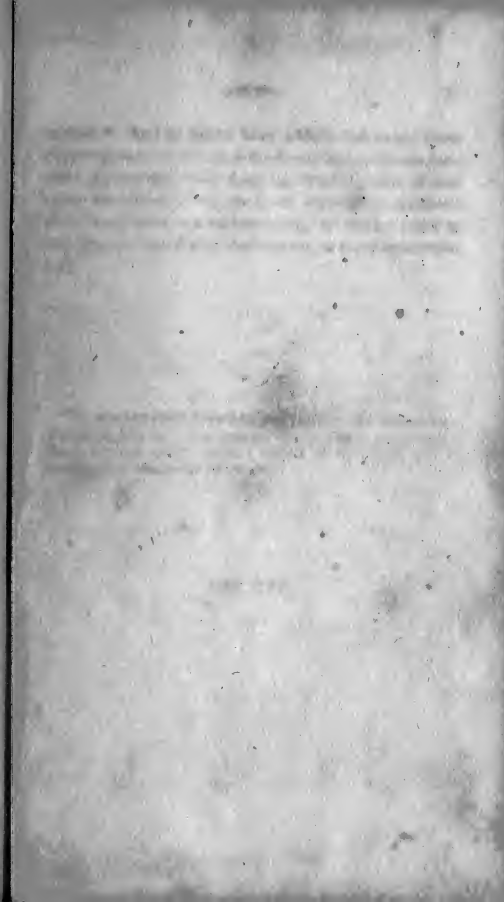
"It is lamentable," exclaims a Reviewer, with that sarcastic shrewdness of remark for which he has been so often celebrated, "to think how little the treatment of persons labouring under the complicated diseases of poverty, poetry, and want of principle, is yet understood in this country. The common method has hitherto been to encourage the immorality by indulgence, to repress the poetry by extravagant and pernicious applauses, and to exasperate the symptoms of poverty, by thoughtless and unmeasured profusion, succeeded by desertion and

neglect." And he might have added, that to see these glittering meteors mistaken for steady constellations,*and their zig-zag deviations from the marked circle of morality altogether overlooked, or ingeniously palliated, while multitudes are endeavouring to imitate them to their present and future destruction, is more lamentable still.

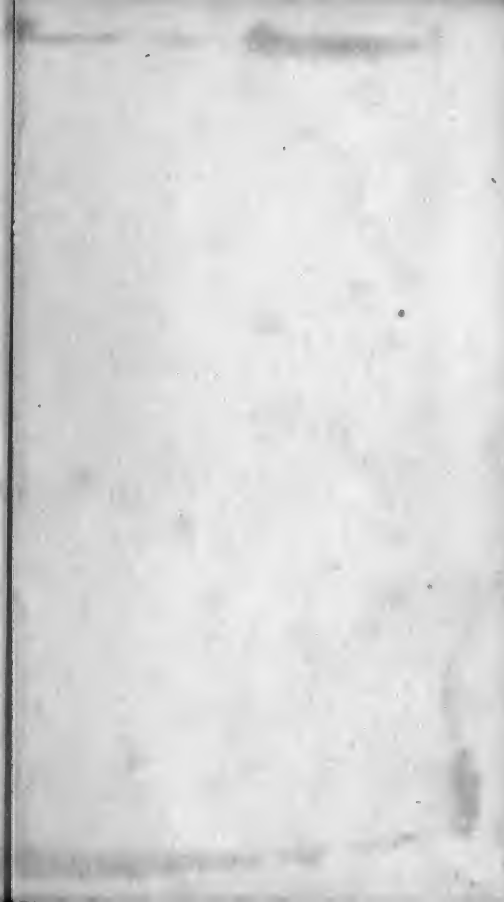
* This is not intended to be understood of them as men of genius, but as moral beings occupying a conspicuous place, whence their conduct comes to have influence in forming the character of others.

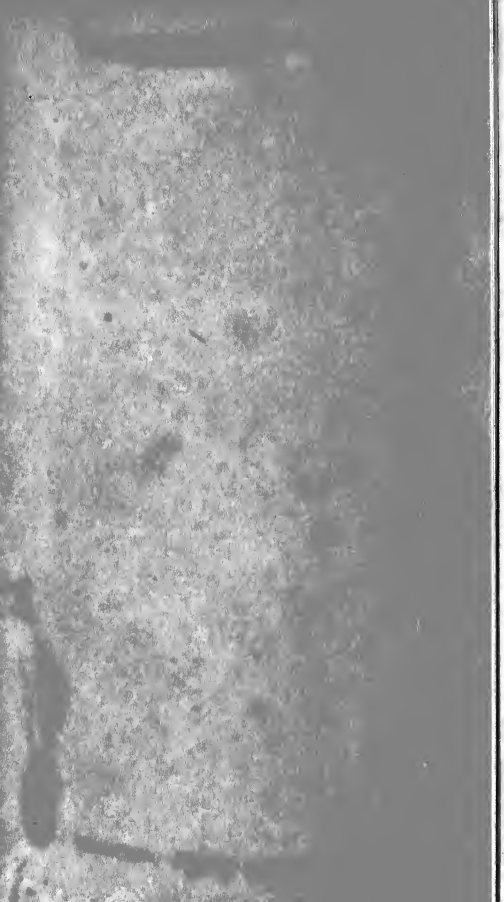
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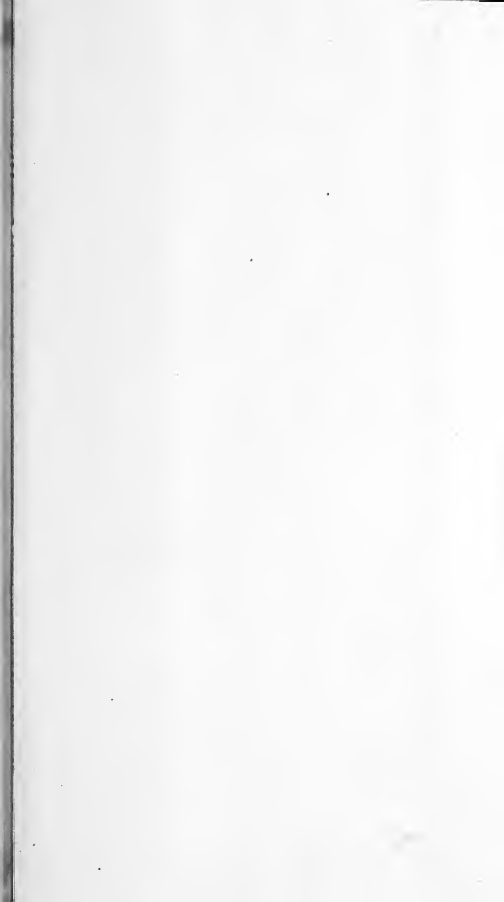
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